



Northfield Planning & Zoning Department

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Do I need a zoning permit?

Short Answer: Yes

Long Answer: You need a zoning permit before you can proceed with any kind of **Land Development**, which is defined on Page 8 of the Northfield Zoning Regulations:

“The division of a parcel into two or more parcels, the construction, reconstruction, conversion, structural alteration, relocation or enlargement of any building or other structure, or of any mining, excavation or landfill, and any change in the use of any building or other structure, or land, or extension of use of land.”

There are three activities for which you do **not** need a permit, although it is still a good idea to check with the **Zoning Administrator (ZA)** to be sure.

- free-standing structures of under 500 cubic feet not on foundations (example: tool shed 8x8x7; dog house, play house, etc)
- repairs to existing structures that do not increase the size or change the use (example: replace rotten deck with new deck of identical size)
- interior renovations

2. How do I apply for one?

Blank permit application forms are available three places:

- Folders on the ZA's desk
- Town Clerk
- Municipal web site: northfield-vt.gov

You can submit them by mail, by dropping them with the Town Clerk, or by dropping them on the ZA's desk. If you have any questions or need help to fill out the application forms, the ZA will be happy to help. You can stop by during Office Hours, leave a phone message, or send an e-mail. The ZA will respond to inquiries within three business days.

3. How long will it take to get a permit?

Short Answer: One to three months from the date you submit it

Long Answer: It depends on who has to review it.

The Zoning Administrator can approve Single Family Homes and Two-Family Homes, and Additions and Accessory Structures associated with Single-Family Homes and Two-Family Homes. Once you submit a complete application, the ZA has 30 days to act on it by either approving it, denying it, or referring it to someone else for review. I usually act on applications within two weeks.

The Zoning Board of Adjustment can grant Variances, approve Conditional Uses, and hear Appeals of the ZA's decisions. Their meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each month, although they only meet if there are scheduled Hearings. Due to notice requirements, applications to the ZBA must be submitted by the first business day of the month in which the meeting will be held.

The Planning Commission approves Subdivisions, Signs, and Site Plans (required for all Permitted Uses other than those approved by the ZA), as well as providing interpretation of the Zoning Regulations. The Planning Commission meets on the first Monday of each month. Sign permit applications may be submitted the Monday prior to the meeting; Subdivision and Site Plan Review applications must be submitted by the last business day of the month prior to the meeting.

If your property is located in the regulatory **Floodplain**, then your complete permit application and supporting materials must be reviewed by the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. This will add an extra 30 days, minimum, to the processing of your permit application. The Zoning Administrator will assist you in preparing your supporting materials for the state review process.

4. Once I have the permit, how soon can I start my project?

Short Answer: Fifteen days

Long Answer: There is a 15-day appeal period following the issuance of every permit (except sign permits) during which you must display the yellow permit placard. This period is meant to inform your abutting landowners (neighbors) of your project, and give them an opportunity to appeal the decision to issue the permit.